88-562

Supreme Court, U.S.
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No.

IN THE SUPREME COURT
OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1988

TERRY LEWIS COLE,

Petitioner,

v.

H. GARY WELLS,

Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the
United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

BRIEF OF RESPONDENT IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED FOR REVIEW

I.

Did the trial court err in not giving instructions regarding crimes of manslaughter and second degree murder?

II.

Is Petitioner entitled to relief pursuant to Brady v Maryland, 373 US 83 (1963)?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
QUESTIONS PRESENTED FOR REVIEW	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
INDEX OF AUTHORITIES	iii
STATEMENT OF THE CASE	1
REASONS FOR DENYING THE WRIT	3
I. THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT ERR IN NOT GIVING INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING CRIMES OF MANSLAUGHTER AND SECOND DEGREE MURDER	3
II. PETITIONER IS NOT ENTITLED TO RELIEF PURSUANT TO BRADY v MARYLAND, 373 US 83 (1963)	15
CONCLUSION	17
RELIEF	18

INDEX OF AUTHORITIES

Page

CASES

Brady v Maryland,
373 US 83 (1963) i,15,16

Henderson v Kibbe,
431 US 145 (1977) 13

Keeble v United States,
412 US 205; 93 S Ct 1993;
36 L Ed 2d 844 (1973) 13

Long v Smith, 663 F2d 18
(CA 6, 1981), cert den,
455 US 1024 (1982) 13

O'Guin v Foltz,
715 F2d 397 (1973) 3,13

People v Carter, 395 Mich 434;
236 NW2d 500 (1975) 5,6

People v Carter, 387 Mich 397;
197 NW2d 57 (1972) 5,11

People v Deitrich, 412 Mich
904; 315 NW2d 407 (1982) 2

People v Deitrich, 87 Mich App
116; 274 NW2d 472 (1978) 11

People v Doss, 406 Mich 90;
276 NW2d 9 (1979) 10

People v Henry, 395 Mich 367;
236 NW2d 489 (1975) 5

People v Jenkins, 395 Mich 440
236 NW2d 503 (1975) 6,7

People v Ora Jones, 395 Mich
379; 236 NW2d 46 (1975) 8,9

People v Paul, 395 Mich 444;
236 NW2d 486 (1975) 7

People v Springer, 100 Mich
App 418; 298 NW2d 750 (1980) 10

People v VanWyck, 402 Mich
266; 262 NW2d 638 (1978) 12

People v West, 408 Mich 332;
291 NW2d 48 (1980) 7,12

Pilon v Bordenkircher,
593 F2d 264 (CA 6, 1974)
vacated and remanded on other
grounds, 441 US 1 (1979) 12,13

United States v Washington,
550 F2d 320 (CA 5, 1977) 16

STATUTES

28 USC §2254(d) 16

MCL 750.329 10

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Petitioner was convicted of first degree felony murder on November 14, 1974, following a jury trial. Petitioner was subsequently sentenced to a term of life imprisonment.

On appeal, the Michigan Court of Appeals remanded for an evidentiary hearing regarding the receipt of awards by several of the prosecution witnesses. Following the hearing, the Michigan Court of Appeals concluded that there was no issue regarding payments to witnesses. The Court of Appeals concluded, however, that an instructional error by the trial court took the element of malice aforethought away from the jury. The Michigan Court of Appeals, therefore, reversed Petitioner's murder conviction and remanded the case for entry of

judgment on the lesser included offense of manslaughter. In People v Deitrich, 412 Mich 904; 315 NW2d 407 (1982), the Michigan Supreme Court reinstated Petitioner's murder conviction.

In October, 1984, Petitioner filed a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus with the United States District Court, Western District of Michigan, Southern Division. On March 22, 1987, United States District Judge Benjamin F. Gibson issued an order approving the Magistrate's Report and Recommendation dismissing the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus.

On May 20, 1988, the United States Court of Appeals affirmed based upon the opinion of the District Court. Petitioner now seeks this court to grant certiorari.

REASONS FOR DENYING THE WRIT

I.

THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT ERR IN NOT GIVING INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING CRIMES OF MANSLAUGHTER AND SECOND DEGREE MURDER.

In O'Guin v Foltz, 715 F2d 397, 399 (1973), the Sixth Circuit noted that unless there is an evidentiary support for the lesser included offense instruction, there can be no violation of due process from the refusal to give it. In this case, Petitioner's trial counsel requested an instruction on manslaughter. However, as the magistrate noted in his report and recommendation, the facts simply do not support an instruction on manslaughter. There was no request for an instruction on second degree murder. In fact, Petitioner's trial counsel specifically

indicated that he felt an instruction for second degree murder would be improper. (TT 606-607).

Petitioner's sole defense was non-participation. The undisputed testimony was clear that the killing had taken place during the commission of a robbery. Even the testimony relied upon by Petitioner in the Sixth Circuit supports this contention. Petitioner's claim in his supplemental brief is that he did not mean to shoot the victim. However, at the time of Petitioner's trial, the only relevant intent was the intent to commit the underlying felony.

In his Sixth Circuit brief Petitioner claimed that at the time of his trial in November, 1974, second degree murder was a

lesser included offense of first degree murder. Petitioner relies upon People v Carter, 387 Mich 397; 197 NW2d 57 (1972). Respondent contends that this is factually inaccurate. It was not until the Michigan Supreme Court's decision in People v Carter, 395 Mich 434; 236 NW2d 500 (1975), that the Michigan Supreme Court indicated that second degree murder was a lesser included offense to first degree murder.

In 1975, after Petitioner's trial, the Michigan Supreme Court issued a series of opinions dealing with the issue as to when the failure of the trial court to instruct on lesser included offenses would be deemed reversible error. In People v Henry, 395 Mich 367; 236 NW2d 489 (1975), the Michigan Supreme Court noted that the goal toward which the court was striving

was to formulate a court rule which would require instructions on lesser included offenses in every appropriate case without request from counsel. (395 Mich at 374). In noting that this goal had not yet been reached the court stated that:

> "We hold that with the sole acceptance of first degree murder cases, failure of the trial court to instruct on lesser included offenses will not be regarded as reversible error, absent requests for such instructions before the jury retires to consider its verdict."
> 395 Mich at 374.

In People v Carter, 395 Mich 434; 236 NW2d 500 (1975), the Michigan Supreme Court held that second degree murder is a lesser included offense of first degree murder. On that same day the Michigan Supreme Court issued its opinion in People v Jenkins, 395 Mich 440; 236 NW2d 503

(1975), in which it held that in every first degree murder case, the trial court was required to instruct sua sponte on the lesser included offense of second degree murder. The court in Jenkins specifically held that the decision was only to apply to cases tried after January 1, 1976. (Respondent again notes that Petitioner's trial was in November, 1974).

Finally, in People v Paul, 395 Mich 444; 236 NW2d 486 (1975), the Michigan Supreme Court stated that:

> "'Manslaughter' is a lesser included offense of first degree murder as well, and if evidence is adduced at trial to support conviction of manslaughter, that charge should be considered."
> 395 Mich at 444.

Respondent again notes that the court in People v West, 408 Mich 332; 291 NW2d

48 (1980), clarified this point by stating that:

> "Voluntary manslaughter is not a necessarily included lesser offense of first degree murder. It may be a lesser included offense, however, if evidence presented at trial would have supported a verdict of guilty of voluntary manslaughter." (Emphasis added.)
> People v West, supra, at page 343.

The Michigan Supreme Court therefore has drawn a distinction between necessarily included offenses and "cognate" lesser offenses. The standards regarding what is necessary to support each is distinct. In People v Ora Jones, 395 Mich 379; 236 NW2d 46 (1975), the Michigan Supreme Court stated that:

> "If the lesser included offense is one that is necessarily included within the greater, the evidence will always support the lesser if it supports the greater. In the area of 'cognate' lesser offenses, the evidence in each case adduced at the particular trial

> must be examined to determine whether that evidence would support a conviction of the lesser offense." People v Ora Jones, at page 390.

Inasmuch as manslaughter is not a necessarily included offense of first degree murder, the evidence adduced at a petitioner's trial must be examined to determine whether that evidence would support a conviction of the lesser offense. Respondent respectfully contends that the evidence adduced at Petitioner's trial would not support conviction for manslaughter. As noted above, even the testimony cited by Petitioner in his supplemental brief in the Sixth Circuit indicates that the killing took place during the commission of a robbery. There is no indication that the killing was done under some great provocation before

Petitioner's passions had subsided. Under MCL 750.329 it states as follows:

> "Any person who shall wound, maim or injure any other person by the discharge of any firearm, pointed or aimed, intentionally but without malice, at any such person, shall, if death ensue from such wounding, maiming or injury, be deemed guilty of the crime of manslaughter."

It is clear under Michigan law that malice is not required to prove manslaughter. An intent to kill or an intent to do serious bodily harm to the deceased is required. [See People v Doss, 406 Mich 90; 276 NW2d 9 (1979) and People v Springer, 100 Mich App 418; 298 NW2d 750 (1980)]. Although voluntary manslaughter is an intentional killing of another, felony murder does not require the intent to kill.

In the instant case Petitioner did not ask for an instruction on second degree murder. Co-defendant Deitrich (who was tried approximately a year before Petitioner) did request an instruction on second degree murder. In its opinion of November 27, 1978, the Michigan Court of Appeals in People v Deitrich, 87 Mich App 116, 135; 274 NW2d 472 (1978), clearly recognizes the retroactivity of the 1975 Carter case to Deitrich. Inasmuch as Deitrich had in fact requested a second degree murder instruction, the court held that he had preserved the issue. This is not the case with respect to Cole who did not request a second degree murder instruction.

Petitioner also challenges the failure of the court to give an instruction on

manslaughter. As the magistrate notes in his report and recommendation, voluntary manslaughter is not a necessarily included offense in first degree murder. Citing People v West, supra, at p. 343. As the Michigan Supreme Court states in West manslaughter may be a lesser included offense if the evidence presented at trial would have supported a verdict of guilty of voluntary manslaughter. Citing People v VanWyck, 402 Mich 266; 262 NW2d 638 (1978). The rules regarding instructions on lesser included offenses are, of course, a matter of state law. In Pilon v Bordenkircher, 593 F2d 264 (CA 6, 1974) vacated and remanded on other grounds, 441 US 1 (1979), the Sixth Circuit Court held that unless "there is [evidentiary] support for the lesser included offense

instruction, there can be no violation of due process from refusal to give it". (593 F2d at 267). See also Keeble v United States, 412 US 205, 213; 93 S Ct 1993; 36 L Ed 2d 844 (1973).

In O'Guin, supra, the Sixth Circuit, citing Pilon, supra, held that if it assumes support for a manslaughter instruction, the failure to so instruct the jury was erroneous. The question is then whether such an error rendered the trial so fundamentally unfair as to deny the defendant due process of law. Citing Henderson v Kibbe, 431 US 145 (1977); Long v Smith, 663 F2d 18 (CA 6, 1981), cert den, 455 US 1024 (1982).

As in the O'Guin case, at the time of Petitioner's trial the element necessary

to sustain a first degree felony murder conviction was the intent to rob. The intent to rob was never disputed. Petitioner's defense was non-participation. Even Petitioner's more recent arguments do not challenge the intent to commit the underlying felony, but rather the intent to kill.

II.

PETITIONER IS NOT ENTITLED TO RELIEF PURSUANT TO BRADY v MARYLAND, 373 US 83 (1963).

Petitioner argues that he is entitled to relief under Brady, supra, because of the prosecution's failure to disclose that certain witnesses would be paid an award if he was convicted. Petitioner claims that the prosecutor knew of these awards, was aware that this information was unavailable to Petitioner's trial counsel, and that the prosecution improperly failed to disclose this information to Petitioner's counsel.

As noted by the magistrate in the United States District Court in his report and recommendation, the offer of a reward is not the type of "exculpatory evidence"

contemplated by Brady, supra. Citing United States v Washington, 550 F2d 320, 330 (CA 5, 1977). The Magistrate properly noted that reward offers do not directly exculpate a defendant and that the rewards in the instant case were offered publicly. Thus, the information in question was equally available to the prosecutor and Petitioner's counsel.

Finally, in the instant case, the trial court held an evidentiary hearing on this issue and specifically concluded that there was no evidence that the state's court witnesses had been influenced by reward offers (Transcript of Evidentiary Hearing, March 10, 1978, pp. 33-36). Such a factual determination by the trial court is presumed to be correct. 28 USC § 2254(d). Petitioner has failed to overcome this presumption.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Respondent suggests that Petitioner has failed to state special and important reasons for the granting of the writ as required by Rule 17 of this Court. Respondent specifically notes that the decision of the Sixth Circuit in the instant case does not conflict with another federal court of appeals, nor has the Sixth Circuit ruled upon an important issue of federal law which has not been settled by this Court. Respondent, therefore, suggests that none of the considerations which might be the basis for granting a writ exist in the instant case.

RELIEF

WHEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, Respondent respectfully prays that this Honorable Court deny the instant Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

Respectfully submitted,

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